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# from the GLOBE'S Bureaus

## Washington

By Edward W. O'Brien

WASHINGTON.—Way back on March 2 of last year, President Kennedy said some things about nuclear testing that sound startling today.

"Until we measure the effects of actual explosions in the atmosphere under realistic conditions," the President declared, "we will not know precisely how to prepare our future defenses, how best to equip our missiles for penetration of an anti-missile system, and whether it is possible to achieve such a system for ourselves."

He was really saying that the United States could be committing suicide if it agrees to a nuclear test ban with the Russians before we know a great deal more about what we're doing.

If there is any doubt about his meaning, another part of his 1962 statement should eliminate the confusion. The President also said that until the necessary testing is completed, we cannot be certain how much of our preparation in the field of nuclear weapons "will turn out to be useless—blacked out, paralyzed, or destroyed by the complex effects of a nuclear explosion."

If our nuclear weapons don't work, we have no defense, and we had all better start learning Russian right now.

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Since March 2, 1962, President Kennedy and much of his Administration have pressed harder than ever for a nuclear deal with the Russians. Many Senators have taken up the same cause, and a tremendous propaganda campaign has developed outside the government.

Yet, the somber questions raised by Mr. Kennedy himself have not been answered, even in the government's innermost councils. The information to answer them is not in existence because evaluation of the tests to which the President referred has not been completed.

The United States, then, has been laboring in



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a cloud of ignorance while it negotiates its future with the Soviet.

Many Senators have been pleading with the Administration to slow down, to determine where it's going before it gets there. Since no one else in the government has taken on the job, the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee since September has been conducting hearings in private to obtain the answers, so that intelligent judgments could be made.

The Subcommittee Chairman, Senator John C. Stennis (Dem.), Mississippi, warned his colleagues a few days ago of the burden they bear in behalf of almost 200 million other Americans.

"In this crucial area, upon which the very survival of our country might depend, we must be certain, not only beyond all reasonable doubt, but to the exclusion of every reasonable hypothesis of a doubt," Senator Stennis said.

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The subcommittee won't reach any conclusions for many weeks. But hints of the dismal tone of the evidence have come already from two members who are not noted for speaking casually.

Both Chairman Stennis and Missouri's Senator Stuart Symington declared they are "disturbed" by what the Subcommittee has heard from Administration officials—from the experts in the State Department, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the Department of Defense, the Air Force, and Central Intelligence Agency.

These witnesses informed the Subcommittee, in Senator Stennis' cautious phrase, of "the possibilities—even in some cases the probabilities—as to what would be our situation should we be caught short." One way of being caught short, the Senators said, would be if the United States embarks on another unpoliced 34-month test moratorium, as it did under President Eisenhower, while the Russians continue to test in secret.

During a brief debate, an ardent advocate of a test ban deal, Minnesota's Senator Hubert Humphrey, said he realizes "there are differences of opinion" on the test ban question.

He was corrected by Senator Symington. There may or may not be differences of opinion. No one can really say because before there are "opinions" there should be facts. And on the whole emotion-laden issue, the element most lacking is the simple one of knowledge.

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x Pers 2 John STENNIS

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